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SCIENCE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1911

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BACTERIOLOGY IN GENERAL EDUCATION¹

IN casting about for a topic around which might be gathered a few thoughts suitable for this occasion, I was impressed with the lack of appreciation of the value of bacteriology in general education and the comparatively small amount of systematic effort that has been put forth to establish efficient methods for teaching this important new science. I became so deeply interested in these phases of the subject that perhaps with more zeal than wisdom I chose for my topic "Bacteriology in General Education."

The practical value of any branch of science keeps pace with the general knowledge of it and an understanding of the methods by which it can be applied. This in turn depends largely upon the teaching of those who are versed in its details of fact and law. The earlier recognition of bacteria did not suggest the important rôle they play in nature's economy. While their existence had been known for more than two centuries, it was not until their causal relation to infectious diseases was recorded that they made an impression upon society in general, and the medical profession in particular. It was the discovery of this great power which they possess to destroy man and beast that afforded a point of contact between humanity and this vast, invisible, organic world about us. If I correctly understand the meaning of our declaration in the constitution of this society, that its object is the promotion of the science of bacteriology, it would seem

MSS. intended for publication and books, etc., intended for review should be sent to the Editor of SCIENCE, Garrison-on-Hudson, N. Y.

¹ Presidential address delivered before the Society of American Bacteriologists, Ithaca, N. Y., December 28, 1910.